



## Fact Sheet

### South Carolina's Business RECYCLING Assistance Program

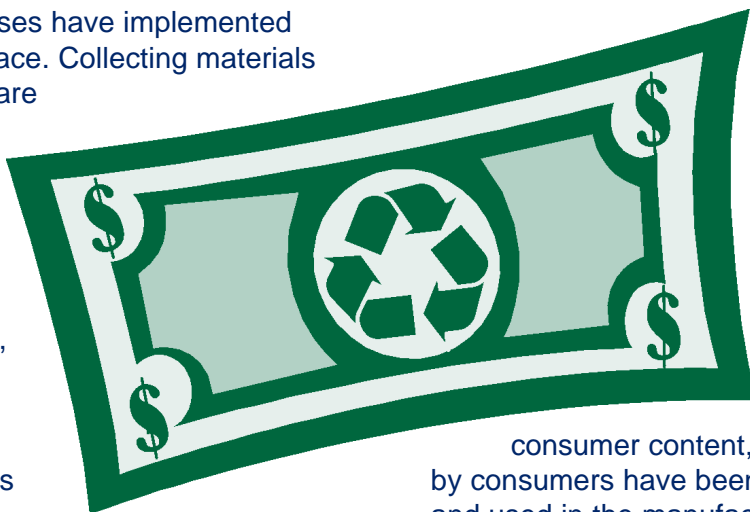
## Buy Recycled

More and more businesses have implemented recycling in their workplace. Collecting materials for reuse and recycling are important components of overall waste management, but if businesses don't "close the loop" by purchasing supplies made from these recycled products, they're not really recycling at all.

Buying recycled provides value to the materials collected for recycling and remanufactured into new products, but that value is dependent on how much demand there is for a product. Businesses can create demand by purchasing products made from or packaged with recycled paper, cardboard, steel, aluminum, plastic, oil and glass. This further stimulates market demand and ensures the continuation of the recycling loop.

There is a wide array of products made from partially or entirely recycled materials, including numerous paper products, printer toner cartridges, rechargeable batteries, plastic containers, re-refined motor oil, wallboard, clothing, pencils, recycling bins and carpeting. In addition, office supplies have some of the largest selections of recycled content products — paper, pens, folders, envelopes, office furniture and file cabinets. Staff in charge of purchasing supplies for your business need to look for recycled products and if they are recyclable.

The first step to learning more about what products are recycled is reading the label. Consumers should try to buy products with the highest percentage of recycled content available.



If a product label says it has pre-consumer content, it refers to materials such as fabric trimmings, damaged or obsolete products and overruns generated by manufacturers. These types of materials have been recycled for years.

If a label lists post-consumer content, it means materials used by consumers have been recovered for recycling and used in the manufacturing process. By selecting products with high post-consumer content, businesses help build demand for materials collected by residential and business recycling programs.

Don't assume that simply seeing a recycling symbol ♻ automatically means a product is made from recycled content or is recyclable. There are not strict rules for using the recycling symbol, and some businesses use the chasing arrows as a reminder to recycle. Read content labels carefully and if there's a question, call the manufacturer's toll-free number if provided and ask for more information.

### Buy Recycled at Work

The huge buying power of businesses, institutions and government agencies can send a powerful message to manufacturers. When the commercial sector purchases recycled products, it helps assure manufacturers that a consistent, long-term demand exists for recycled products.

To implement a Buy Recycled program at work, support from upper-management is critical for

success. Sometimes buying recycled products is slightly more expensive than products made from virgin materials, but when you consider the environmental impacts of depleting natural resources and the rising cost of waste disposal, the added cost may not be so high.

Businesses may adopt a formalized preference for recycled products, with an established price or bid preference of five to 10 percent over other products. Bids should show the minimum amount of recycled content that would be acceptable, but do some research to make sure that the minimum level is readily available in your area. Another alternative would be setting a percentage of total purchases that must have recycled content.

Some businesses might consider establishing cooperative purchasing agreements that allow them to pull their purchasing power into a single order or bid. Although such agreements require planning and communication, they can help lower overall unit costs and save money for everyone involved.

Adopting a closed-loop system allows businesses that recycle materials to buy products made from these items, such as re-refined motor oil or rechargeable nickel cadmium batteries. It also helps guarantee markets for recyclable materials by maintaining constant demand.



Let your customers know your preference for recycled products. Add the recycling symbol to your letterhead and labels, telling the percentage of recycled content on all printed materials.

## Remanufactured Products

Remanufacturing is the repairing and restoring of used, durable products to a "like new" condition. They are disassembled, cleaned and inspected, refurbished as necessary, and then reassembled and tested to ensure that they meet original product specifications. Their performance must be as good as new products in order to compete in the marketplace.

Examples of refurbished products include furniture, toner cartridges, machinery, medical equipment, computers, cranes and forklifts, pallets, photocopiers, steam turbines, and automotive tires, engines and parts.



Using products made from recycled materials also promotes energy conservation. For example, it takes 95 percent less energy to produce aluminum from recycled cans than it takes to produce it from ore. There are considerable energy savings for products made from recycled steel, plastics, glass and paper.

By purchasing materials made from recycled content, businesses can ensure the success of recycling and promote more effective solid waste management. Buying recycled helps close the loop, sustain markets and conserves energy and natural resources. It also sends a positive message to customers, suppliers, employees and others that protecting the environment is good business.